DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 174 CE 063 489

AUTHOR	Shabecoff, Alice; And Others
TITLE	Community Job Initiatives: Readiness, Training, Creation and Retention.
INSTITUTION	Community Information Exchange, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	17p.; Sponsored by a grant from Citibank.
AVAILABLE FROM	Community Information Exchange, 1029 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 710, Washington, DC 20005 ($7; $25 annual subscription).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Strategy Alert; n38 Win-Spr 1993
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Agency Cooperation; Citizen Participation; *Community Involvement; *Community Programs; Cooperative Programs; *Coordination; Educational Finance; *Employment Programs; Federal Legislation; Federal Programs; Human Resources; *Job Development; Job Training; Program Development; *Unemployment

ABSTRACT

A community-based approach can excel at putting people back to work. The community-based strategy for helping people find and keep jobs needs to provide comprehensive and integrated services. Collaboration is likely to be the most practical means to round up those services. Community groups usually have a dual purpose in pursuing a jobs program: to help local people attain a decent standard of living and to help improve the community's economic stability. Strategies to achieve these goals include job search assistance, job training, job creation, job retention, and the financing tools to support those activities. The most effective job search assistance programs provide vocational training, literacy education, child care assistance, transportation, work or community experience, and case management. Job training programs succeed when they are linked with labor markets and provide an integrated array of assistance. New business ventures have the best chance of success if they are tied to market demand and have a strong job training element. Approaches to a conscious, deliberate strategy for saving jobs include early warning, employee buyouts, worker cooperative, retraining and job creation, eminent domain, and succession planning. (Case examples with contact information, a list of recommended readings, and an annotated list of resource organizations are provided for each strategy. Federal government employment and training programs are identified; contact information is provided.) (YLB)

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STRATEGY ALERT

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CE 063 489

A Quarterly Report of the Community Information Exchange. Winter/Spring 1993. Double Issue #38.

Community Job Initiatives: Readiness, Training, Creation and Retention

Jobs: A Mirror of Our Economy and Society

The current unemployment statistics say a lot about weaknesses in our economic structure and they also hold a mirror up to deficiencies in our society. There were 9,384,000 unemployed people in 1992, or 7.4 percent of the working-age population.[1] Though the economy may now be recovering, good jobs are not coming back, a fact painfully clear to everyone from the 'man on the street' to the president and particularly painful in America's disadvantaged communities.

Part of the problem is caused by the large-scale structural change taking place in our economy. The nation has lost 1,168,000 manufacturing jobs in the past 10 years.[1] Whereas 22.4 percent of the jobs in America in 1980 were in manufacturing, by 1990, that figure had dropped to 17.4 percent.[1] "The percentage of unemployed who lost their jobs permanently rather than being temporarily laid off, reached its highest level on record" in 1992.[2] Furthermore, the jobs being created now pay less and are more fragile. Among working people, over nine million are earning wages below the poverty level.[3]

The other part of the problem is found in the structure of the society. While unemployment has risen to the top of the national consciousness in the past few years, the lack of jobs is now and has consistently been a problem of crisis proportions to disadvantaged communities and populations. In 1992, among Whites, the joblessness rate was 6.5 percent, among African Americans, 14.1 percent. African American teenagers were unemployed at a rate of 39.8 percent and White youth at 17.1 percent.[1]

Among White families where the householder works, 6.1 percent are still below the poverty line. But among African American families, that percent grows to 18.9 percent and for Hispanic families, it's 19.6 percent.[4] African American men aged 25-34 have over the past decade experienced a 161 percent increase in their numbers who work under the poverty line.[5]

"The problems of poverty, joblessness, and social isolation in the inner-city ghetto," says William Julius Wilson, "...require a close look at the declining labor market opportunities for the truly disadvantaged. It also requires a close look at the declining social organization of inner city neighborhoods that reinforces the economic marginality of their residents."[6]

Rural America has its own structural problems. Families living outside metropolitan areas have incomes only two-thirds of those in cities. African American families in non-metro areas have family incomes of $15,677 in 1990, or half of White families.[7] In rural areas, when an employer closes down or downsizes, it may have been the only employer in the area.

Community-based Ways to Put People Back to Work

These figures also point to the rightness of a bottoms-up, community-based approach to putting people back to work. There are at least three essential reasons why community groups excel at dealing with unemployment:

- first, because their mission is focused on the disadvantaged;
- secondly, because they understand and are ready to provide the holistic array of self-help interventions that are the only way to bring about long-term successful results; and
- thirdly, because the community is the context for changing parts of the market system—through projects and through policy reforms—in ways that will benefit disadvantaged people.

William Julius Wilson calls for a close look at the problems of pover-

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ty and social structure. Who is organized and committed to take that close look—in rural areas as well as inner-cities—and take action if not community-based organizations?

A community-based strategy for helping people find and keep jobs needs to provide comprehensive and integrated services. People attending job training courses or holding down a job need day care, remedial education, transportation, affordable housing and, often, services that support the development of their family, such as parental counseling or budgeting advice. The most effective initiatives are comprehensive and integrated, covering the spectrum of social, physical and economic activities.

Collaboration is likely to be the most practical means to round up those services. Neighborhood groups don't need to do it all. They can and should form collaborations with other agencies and players—establishing common goals, designing programs together, figuring out how best to allocate resources, and then splitting up the activities to carry out the plan.

Community groups usually have a dual purpose in pursuing a jobs program. They want to help local people attain a decent standard of living, and they want to help improve the community's economic stability. There are different ways to achieve these goals—through job search assistance, job training, job creation, job retention, and the financing tools to support those activities. The more these strategies are combined, the stronger the impact.

In deciding which approach to take, a community group can consider three measures of scale and targeting: Who benefits? (will it really benefit the lower-income people or special target population that the group is most concerned about?); How much benefit will it bring about? (how many people will it reach, and will the benefits lead to self-sufficiency?); and Are the benefits durable? (will the jobs last and will the broad enhancement of the local economy last?).

What the field of community-based development has learned over the past twenty years about making an impact through a jobs program is that the program must be demand-driven. It must be linked to the local economy, identifying a need and filling it. The case examples in this ALERT demonstrate how the different approaches fit together and how they build on local market demand.

Endnotes

[1] Interview with Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force Statistics Division, 3/9/93.

[2] "Economic Report of the President, January 1993." pg 60. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.

[3] Interview with the Bureau of the Census, Poverty Statistics Division, 3/9/93. Of those people working year-round, full-time, 2,076,000 are still below the poverty level; the remainder of the nine million workers falling below the poverty are not employed either year-round or full-time.

[4] "Poverty in the United States: 1991," pg 113. Bureau of the Census, Washington, DC.

[5] "Save Jobs & Communities Newsletter," Vol. 3, pg 12. Federation for Industrial Retention & Renewal, Chicago, IL.

[6] "Building Strong Communities: Strategies for Urban Change." 82 pgs. 1992. This report of a 1992 conference sponsored by the Ford, Rockefeller and Annie E. Casey Foundations includes the keynote address by William Julius Wilson (University of Chicago sociologist and author of the 1987 book,"The Truly Disadvantaged," which reopened the national debate about poverty and race); and papers by community development leaders, educators, civil rights advocates and others. Available from the American Writing Corp., 400 International Sq., 1825 Eye St., NW, Washington, DC 20006. Free.

[7] "Money Income of Households: 1990," pgs 53 & 54, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, DC.

Job Search Assistance

Job search assistance programs help the unemployed person learn the skills and behavior to look for, find and hold a job. They teach how to prepare a resume and job application, how to gather job leads, how to interview, and how to behave in the workplace. The program also functions as a placement agency. It actively recruits and develops job openings among businesses in the area, matches their program participants to likely job opportunities, then follows-up with both the employer and newly-hired employee to ensure both are satisfied. Even in cases where the job is only an entry-level job, it can still be useful as a ladder to advancement.

The most effective programs—that make a real impact in increasing participants' employment and earnings and job retention—combine job search assistance with vocational training, literacy, child care assistance, transportation,

work or community experience, and case management.

For programs dealing with long-term unemployed people, who are caught up in a long history of isolation, disadvantage and negative self-image, the job search assistance means offering positive ways of thinking and a long-term community of support. "It is a long and difficult journey in human development, not a one-step event about getting a job," according to Project Match, a program associated with Northwestern University in Chicago. They find that participants not yet ready for the mainstream world of work can still take steps in the journey out of welfare, through voluntary community service or an occupational training course. Project Match and some other programs working with disadvantaged people, such as Jubilee Jobs in Washington, DC, stay connected to their program participants and continue to offer them whatever support they need over a span of years.

Peer support groups are often used as part of a job search assistance program, and skills building can take place as a group workshop. Peer groups can also be run as a self-help club by job seekers, under the sponsorship of a community organization. This approach seems to work especially well for dislocated workers who refresh their job search skills, give each other encouragement and tips, offer networking contacts, and host guest speakers. The group often maintains a job bank as part of its efforts.

Literacy levels, in reading, math and critical thinking, often need improvement among job seekers who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Experience over the years in providing remedial education indicates that it works best when it is directly tied to the participant's goal of preparing for a job. If the person wants to be a carpenter, the program teaches literacy using a carpentry manual. Texas Adult Literacy Laubach (TALL) forms learners into support groups to discuss employment concerns, meeting in places such as the JOBS-funded job preparation agency. Each learner creates a job preparation action plan and, with his or her individual tutor, practices reading and writing to further the action plan. For more information:

TALL
PO 2152,
Austin, TX 78768-2152
512/891-9600.

V'Burg Initiative, Inc. Vicksburg, MS

In the small town of Vicksburg, Mississippi, and its surrounding rural areas, about 35 percent of the families receive public assistance and 74 percent of female-headed households with young children have incomes below the poverty level. Yet when the Vicksburg planning department investigated the local job market, they found potential job openings in good paying industries ranging from the area's shipbuilding companies to health care. The missing link was the specialized training to prepare unemployed people to qualify for those jobs.

Even if training were offered, however, the city knew that the people they wanted most to help move out of welfare and toward self-sufficiency—low-income women heading single-parent families living in rural areas—would not take advantage of the opportunity. Though many women had the motivation, they lacked transportation to get to training sites. They also lacked day care for their children and were too poor to purchase child care services. Compounding the problem was the scattered delivery system for various social services for families in poverty.

Vicksburg has created an initiative that overcomes these hurdles through a unique combination of transitional housing, education and training, and support services, many of which are brought to the residents' doorstep. Under the sponsorship and ownership of V'-Burg, Inc., a nonprofit development organization founded in 1989 by the city for this purpose, they have built a new community of nine handsomely-designed, 2- 3-bedroom single-family houses and a 4,000 square foot child care/adult training facility, circling a common green space. The site is the 4.5 acres of an abandoned drive-in movie. In order to combine the residential and commercial buildings, the site was zoned as a Planned Unit Development.

The houses are home for 30 months to nine women with young children. At the end of that period, the residents should be trained and employed and ready to move into other affordable housing in the community which V'Burg is now developing. The residents were selected for their eligibility for Section 8 housing assistance, AFDC qualifications, clear rental histories, and interest in employment. The case manager on site helps each resident create a plan for her own eventual self-sufficiency, including goals for a career and education to attain the career and personal development such as parenting and budgeting skills. The plan has short- and long-term action steps. To reinforce the

V'Burg links education, training, and support services to help low income women find and keep jobs. The Initiative also provides quality child care and transitional housing in single family homes.

seriousness of the plan, it is attached to each participant's lease.

Where needed, the case manager will help residents improve their literacy skills by arranging for them to attend remedial education classes. However, the current residents are all at an educational and motivational level where they qualified to enroll in two-year courses at a local community college and are studying to secure degrees in computers, secretarial science, early childhood education and nursing.

The children are cared for at the on-site child development center, which offers day care and after-school programs. Presently 23 resident children are enrolled, while the remaining 22 slots are used by other qualified families in the community. The facility also serves as a "Life Skills Laboratory," where parents meet for workshops on topics such as budgeting, reproductive health care, drug awareness and home maintenance. V'Burg and its Self-Sufficiency Committee, which represents 13 human service agencies in the county, arrange these workshops and coordinate the delivery of any other services the residents need. The services are provided by a network of 28 county agencies. The case manager helps the resident arrange for transportation, secure grants for training and education, and fulfill her plan for self-sufficiency.

The federal JOBS, JTPA, and the Child Care Development Block Grant and programs subsidize the residents' child care, transportation, books and uniform fees. Other costs, such as funding for meals and social services, are covered by the same Block Grant, United Way and other private sources.

The development, which cost $1.1 million, was constructed debt-free with financing that included $500,000 from the state's CDBG program. The state had made these funds available under a special competition to select innovative projects that proposed linking affordable housing and comprehensive services as a model for helping Mississippi's low-income population gain economic independence. Vicksburg set up V'Burg, proposed its initiative, and was one of two towns awarded a grant. Other financing included $453,233 from the city, $30,000 from the county, donations by the local utility, Entergy, of heating systems worth $62,400 for all the units, a $30,282 grant from the regional Public Housing Authority, and contributions totalling $18,000 from banks and local businesses. Professionals donated their services pro bono to many elements of the development, such as appraisal and environmental impact assessment. Residents receive Section 8 rental assistance. For more information:

Linda Perry, Executive Director
V'Burg Initiative, Inc.
1306 Hope St.
Vicksburg, MS 39180
601/638-8545

Recommended Readings

"Changing What Counts: Re-Thinking the Journey Out of Welfare," by Toby Herr and Robert Halpern. 70 pgs. 1991. Available from Project Match, c/o Erikson Institute, 25 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610; $5.00.

"Helping the Homeless Find Permanent Jobs," by Anne Vor der Bruegge. 31 pgs. 1989. Published by and available from Jubilee Jobs, Inc., see address below. $5.00.

"The Self-Help Bridge to Employment: How to Start, Maintain and Expand Self-Help Support Groups for Job Seekers," by Ellie Wegener. 64 pgs. 1992. Published by and available from the Employ-

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ment Support Center, c/o NCUEA, 900 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Rm 444, Washington, DC 20001. $20.00.

"Working Towards Self-Sufficiency: An Employment Counselor's Manual," by Joy Horvath. 150 pgs. 1988. Published by and available from The Enterprise Foundation, PO Box 490, Alexandria, VA 22313. $45.00.

Resource Organizations

Enterprise Jobs Network
Enterprise Foundation
500 American City Building
Columbia, MD 21044
410/964-1230

The Enterprise Foundation provides training, technical assistance and information-sharing in operating a job search and placement program to neighborhood groups who affiliate with the Jobs Network.

Jubilee Jobs
2712 Ontario Rd., NW
Washington, DC 20009
202/667-7390

Jubilee Jobs (a project of the community-based Jubilee Housing) holds yearly workshops to train other community groups in serving the homeless with a job search and placement program.

National Employment Initiative
U.S. Programs Division
World Vision
919 W. Hungtington Dr.
Monrovia, CA 91016
818/305-7827

As part of World Vision's community development program in the U.S., the Initiative provides matching grants, training and ongoing support to church-based nonprofit community groups wishing to launch job search and placement programs.

Job Training

Job training programs offer practical vocational training to unemployed or underemployed people to give them a marketable skill. Job training has moved into the spotlight as the government and policymakers struggle with the question of how to shape welfare programs to help people move toward work and self-sufficiency. But welfare recipients are only one of the groups that can benefit from job training. Others include dislocated workers, youth, immigrants, and the homeless.

Vocational training can lead to a dead end, or to a job. In analyzing what factors lead to program success, part of the answer seems to depend on the way the program deals with the business world and the other part lies in the way the program deals with its participants.

- Programs are more likely to succeed the better they link the training and its content to labor markets where there are shortages of workers. Many successful job training programs actually collaborate with local businesses and industries which often help design and underwrite the curriculum.
- Programs are more likely to succeed if they provide an integrated array of assistance to the participants. The key elements of an integrated model are:
  - All participants are placed directly into the job-specific skill training course of their choice. There are no tests or entrance requirements.
  - Remediation of basic educational deficiencies is integrated with job-specific skill training. It occurs not just concurrently, but as much as possible with the training for specific job skills.
  - Support services, such as child care and counseling, are available and convenient.

Remedial education is usually needed to help disadvantaged people improve their basic skills in math, reading and critical thinking. Though many training programs require participants to improve their literacy skills before allowing them to enroll in training, studies show that this process often backfires—people drop out and never return.

Youth job training can be targeted to young people in high school or to drop-outs. Our nation is said, by most experts, to have the worst school-to-work transition system in the industrialized world. For in-school students, youth apprenticeship programs (such as are commonplace in Germany) are beginning to pick up steam and are likely to be encouraged by the Clinton Administration. These programs integrate school and work, giving students the motivation to meet high academic standards while training them in specific vocational skills. Jobs for the Future (see below) publishes materials describing the elements of apprenticeship programs.

Youth who are at-risk or have dropped out of school usually face a lifetime of unemployment or disadvantage unless they are given a hand up. Effective programs combine leadership development, life skills (such as help in avoiding pregnancy), literacy assistance, vocational counseling, job placement, and vocational training. Jobs for Youth in New York City, founded in 1958, has gradually shifted from a job placement to a

career development program. Its Academy for Career Excellence (ACE), started in 1990, targets out of school, low-income youth, ages 16 to 25 and allows them to proceed at their own pace through tiers of assistance delivered in 6-day workshops. Starting with sessions that build their employability and personal development, they can proceed to career exploration and occupational skills training, and, if and when ready, to a permanent job with a promising career ladder. Child care and remedial education are available. Jobs for Youth, Inc. has been replicated in Boston and Chicago. For more information:

David Harris,Executive Director,
Jobs for Youth, Inc.
1831 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10128
212/348-1800.

Center for Employment Training
San Jose, California

For 25 years, the Center for Employment Training has met the job training needs of Mexican-American migrant farmworkers in California with one of the nation's most effective integrated approaches. Recognizing that a wage is the first step to a stable life for persons with limited language, reading, and math skills, CET aims to get a person into a job as quickly as possible. To do this, it combines skills training, social services coordination, and the participation of local industry.

CET has learned that students need to see a direct relationship between classes and performing a skill on a job, if they are to stick with the class. So, it provides "learning in context," teaching language and math skills concurrent with and as they pertain to the job skills being taught.

The second key piece of CET's approach is its coordination of social services. Resource counselors help students to access the social services they need, such as emergency housing assistance, child care, food, or counseling for substance abuse. CET itself now provides housing for 30 students at one site, and intends to expand its housing role.

Third, all students are permitted to participate in a one to two week period of "skills sampling" before they enroll in a class. This sampling allows the student to determine his or her interest in a class while instructors have the opportunity to assess the student's skill level and background. With the help of a counselor, the student also formulates an Employability Development Plan that clarifies goals and identifies remediation and social service needs. The Center does not encourage or discourage any one skills class for any one participant unless there are extreme language barriers. An open entry/open exit policy allows a student to enter the class of choice and begin training after the skill sampling period.

In class, a student receives both individualized and group training in the vocation he or she has chosen along with language and other remedial education relating to that skill. Classes also include instruction on life skills, work habits, communication strategies and job preparedness. Progress is competency-based, which means that each trainee must demonstrate his or her mastery of a competency level before moving to the next. There is no fixed course length; students may stay until they find a job. Near completion of a course, Job Developers work with the students to link them with available jobs.

The Center for Employment Training was established in 1967 by a group of concerned citizens in a San Jose Catholic Church. Led by Father Anthony Soto, the parish priest, the group received grants totaling $80,000 to provide machine shop training to Mexican-Americans in the basement of Fr. Soto's church. The group also recruited an Executive Director who had experience in both the public and private sectors.

Today, CET employs 500 persons and has an annual budget of $29 million. CET manages 25 training centers in California, Arizona, and Nevada that together offer over 25 different training courses. CET credits much of its growth to the formation of a partnership early on with local industry through the establishment of an Industrial Advisory Board. This Board met monthly to review training curriculum and provide advice on class changes based on new technology and trends in the industry. While the businesses on the Board got a steady pool of trained workers, CET benefited by getting local industry to have a stake in the program and to provide a constant source of jobs for trainees. Today, each training facility has its own Industrial Advisory Board.

The participation of local industry at each training center is also significant because it enables CET to respond to the ever-changing job market by dropping and adding training classes as needed, which it does several times a year. The Center makes such a determination with labor statistics and the advice of the Industrial Advisory Board for courses offered at a particular site. While CET owns its training

Local industry's participation on their advisory board ensures that CET trains people for existing jobs.

facilities, most equipment is leased so there is not a great loss when dropping a class.

Approximately 72 percent of CET's budget is for training costs. These costs are covered by federal, state, and private funds. Federal funds include the Job Training Partnership Act and Department of Labor 402 Farmworkers Program. Federal Pell Grants and Stafford Loans for students' tuition provide about 10 - 15 percent of the budget. State funds are received through the California Department of Health and Human Service's Employment Training Panel. Approximately 10 percent of CET's costs are paid for by private insurance companies through the state-mandated Worker Retraining Program. Some private funds also are provided by foundations and financial institutions.

The Center's non-training costs, including social services coordination, child care, ESL classes, and rehabilitation of facilities are covered by combining available federal, state, and local funds. For example, CET has received support from the federal Community Development and Community Services Block Grant programs, federal English as a Second Language funds, State of California Weatherization Program funds, State Emergency Housing funds, State GAIN Program (Greater Avenues for Independence) funds, and local county child care funds.

CET's current job placement rate of 70 percent for its trainees is indicative of the success of the "learning in context" approach. Another indicator is an evaluation of CET's participation in a demonstration program funded by the Rockefeller Foundation in the mid-1980s. Twelve months after a group of low-income, minority, single mothers completed training at CET under the demonstration program, 46 percent were working and enjoying a 47 percent increase in earnings. According to the 1990 report from the Foundation, CET's approach made the largest impact on employment and earnings lasting beyond the first year compared to the three other training approaches in the demonstration.

CET recently received a $1.5 million grant from the Department of Labor to assist ten organizations to replicate their training model. These groups include community-based, non-profits such as the New Community Corporation in New Jersey and public bodies, such as the Cities of New York and Chicago. CET is also working with Belize and Barbuda-Antigua to help these countries develop similar programs. For more information:

Tony Bustamante
Communications Manager
Center for Employment Training
701 Vine Street
San Jose, CA 95110
408/287-7924

Recommended Readings

"Combining Literacy and Employment Training for Women: Steps for Starting a Program," by Judy Beck. 63 pgs. 1992. Published by and available from Wider Opportunities for Women, 1325 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20005. $29.00.

"More Jobs and Higher Pay: How an Integrated Program Compares with Traditional Programs," by John Burghardt and Anne Gordon. 41 pgs. 1992. Published by and available from the Rockefeller Foundation, Communications Office, 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Free.

"Youth Intervention: A Manual for Developing a Neighborhood-Based Program," by Carol Hauser. 147 pgs. 1991. Published by and available from Research & Information Services, Neighborhood

Reinvestment Corporation, 1325 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20005. $10.00.

Resource Organizations

Jobs for the Future
1815 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02140
617/661-3411

A nonprofit policy organization that develops new strategies and demonstration programs for strengthening education and workforce preparation.

Partnership for Training & Employment Careers
1620 I St., NW
Washington, DC 20006
202/887-6120

This is the trade association for people working in training and employment programs. Subscription to monthly The Partnership Advantage costs $35; membership including newsletter costs $45.

Job Creation

In many inner city neigborhoods and rural communities, there are just not enough jobs, especially in communities beset by plant closings or the downsizing of the workforce by major employers. Community groups often find they need to fix the supply side—the availability of decent jobs—as much as is possible.

Creating new business ventures, ranging from incubators to community enterprises, is one strategy to expand the job base. These ventures have the best chance of success if they are tied to market demand, especially to growth sectors of the economy. Some community groups start new businesses on their own while others joint venture with an industry. Community-based businesses and industries, besides expanding the job base, have the added benefit of growing the local economy from within—which is a strong goal of community-based development.

Training businesses set up new income-producing ventures with a strong job training element. Esperanza Unida is one of the nation's most successful models. The business must have the potential for at least partial self-sufficiency, which in turn makes it attractive to public and private subsidies. This model also has the potential for scale and for flexibility in targeting various disadvantaged people, from the long-term unemployed to dislocated workers. Training businesses are not, however, easy to start and keep afloat. They require a balancing act between the demands of training and the demands of production, which has often proved fatal to the venture.

Small business assistance programs assist local start-up or expanding small businesses which, if successful, will create jobs and hire local people. These programs offer experienced and realistic planning and problem-solving help as the first step. They provide business feasibility analysis, business packaging, access to capital, and follow-up advice for the business. Capital may not, however, be the most serious need and capital divorced from technical assistance is not effective.

Microenterprises are businesses with five or fewer employees, one or more of whom owns the enterprise. A growing number of community groups are finding that microenterprise programs can help low-income people, including long-term welfare recipients, break out of a cycle of dependence and poverty. Self-employment is also a viable alternative for dislocated workers. Programs to assist these businesses provide seed capital funds, enterpreneurial training and assistance, and peer support systems. Sometimes they offer personal supports such as career counseling or day care.

Incubators are facilities designed to meet the unique needs of small businesses in their early growth stages. They provide the businesses with rental space, shared office services, management and business assistance, a creative entrepreneurial environment and access to financing. It is a strategy found effective both in rural and urban settings. The Local Development Corporation of East New York has, after nine years, just finished construction on its 30,000 square foot incubator. The one-story building, divided into smaller, self-contained units, will house and assist small businesses resulting in 30 to 45 new jobs for the first round of tenants; as they graduate out of the incubator, other firms will move in. The $1.6 million project was financed with grants from the Economic Development Administration and New York City's capital budget. For more information:

Rick Recny
Chair
LDC of NY
116 Williams Ave.
Brooklyn, NY 100207
718/385-6700.

Flexible manufacturing networks (FMNs) bring a small group of firms together temporarily to produce a particular product which none of them can manufacture alone. Each firm belongs to a series of FMNs and new networks continually form to produce cus-

tom or short run items in response to changing markets. For example, ACEnet (Applachian Center for Economic Networks, formerly Worker Owned Network) is experimenting with FMNs to manufacture housing components for elderly people and people with disabilities, such as adjustable, accessible kitchen cabinets. For more information:

ACEnet
94 N. Columbus Rd.
Athens, OH 45701.

Revolving loan funds provide the capital that low-income owners of start-up and expanding small businesses otherwise have trouble in accessing. These businesses rarely need capital at below-market rates; the problem is usually access, not the cost of capital. Microenterprise loan funds sometimes form their borrowers into peer lending circles, through which the members give each other advice and encouragement and take responsibility for lending decisions and repayments.

Esperanza Unida Milwaukee, WI

Esperanza Unida ("united hope") creates new community businesses as a way of accomplishing a number of results at one time: job creation, job training, economic development, and revenue generation. The organization, originally founded in 1971 as a social service agency, has been transformed by its current executive director, Richard Oulahan, into a series of powerful self-help enterprises. It serves unemployed people from the entire Milwaukee area, though the target population is the South Side Hispanic community. Its programs, all of which are bilingual, include auto mechanics, auto body repair, used car sales, housing rehabilitation, child care, metal fabrication, and asbestos abatement.

Esperanza Unida's first training business was their Auto Repair Training Center. Housed in a formerly abandoned auto dealership, it reuses and rebuilds vehicles, donated by individuals and companies who in turn receive a tax deduction for their gift. 600 to 700 cars a year are donated. Some are stripped for parts, and others repaired and sold through the center's sales department. The center is also the largest full-service auto mechanical repair and auto body shop on the near south side of Milwaukee. It services 10 to 20 cars daily, with a customer count of 3,500 per year. It generated $407,000 in revenue in 1992.

Repairing those vehicles has created 15 full-time jobs for mechanics, body specialists and others in the course of three years. Under their supervision, the shop also gives on-the-job training to 15 to 20 unemployed workers at a time, including people who lost jobs through plant shutdowns and the long-term unemployed. Trainees spend three to six months learning auto repair or how to do auto body work; they spend a minimum of four hours a day without pay. The center has a 70 percent track record in placing the graduates of this program in jobs. About two-thirds of the full-time auto center employees are graduates of the training.

Richard Oulahan estimates that the actual cost per student is about $6,000. However, Esperanza Unida can offset the costs by the Center's revenues and by grants that covered the expenses of the Center's state-of-the-art equipment. As a result, outlays per student are roughly $2,000, which the organization raises every year from the Job Training Partnership Act, Community Development Block Grant and other funding sources.

To equip the 37,000 square foot Center when it first opened in April 1984, Oulahan got permission from the Firestone company to strip one of their closed-down shops. Tools, tie changers, car

Esperanza Unida's auto repair and body shop employs 15 full-time mechanics in one of the fastest growing industries in America.

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racks, and hundreds of other items were hauled off, worth $13,000, enough to open for business.

The owners of an abandoned car dealership let Esperanza Unida use their building free for a year. Oulahan then tried to get a $150,000 seed grant from the State Manpower Council to hire a trainer. As is often the case when a community development group tries to get into the job training funding loop, "Esperanza Unida had to fight its way in. We held a press conference, organized, and threatened to demonstrate against the manpower agency," recalls Oulahan. The strategy succeeded. Once that piece of public subsidy was awarded, Esperanza Unida found it easier to secure other public funding.

The agency was able to buy half the building the following year, with $10,000 they had made from their work and $110,000 from a Milwaukee County Community Development Block Grant. The next year, Esperanza bought the remaining half with a $125,000 CDBG no-interest loan. "No one had ever asked the county supervisors for a loan, rather than a grant, so they were really excited," Oulahan explained. After two years, the loan was forgiven. Additional and upgraded equipment—such as engine analyzers, a body shop frame machine, tow trucks—was later secured through grants from a local philanthropy, the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation.

In selecting auto repair and body shop as a business, Oulahan did some research which indicated that auto mechanics was the fastest growing job in the country. It was also a solid business choice for the economic conditions prevailing at the time since consumers hold onto their old cars during a recession and need them repaired. With subsequent ventures, Esperanza Unida has continued market research and in some cases also prepared a formal business plan, as precondition to attracting funding and as a plan of action. It also listens to the people in the surrounding community to identify needed ventures.

Most of its training businesses are "open entry-open exit" (that is, people can sign up whenever there's a vacancy in the program, and can leave when they have finished at their own pace); there are no entrance requirements; and people can learn English while they get skills training.

In areas adjoining the auto shop, Esperanza has set up its headquarters, a day care center that services the community and trains women as home day care providers, and a Learning Center for remedial education.

Proceeds from Esperanza Unida's ventures generated $800,000 of its $1.5 million budget this year. Currently Esperanza Unida has 40 employees. The trainees and employees are 70 percent Hispanic, 20 percent Black, and 10 percent White. About 100 people a year are being trained through the Esperanza's enterprises. Its training graduates often take entry-level jobs at $6 to $7 an hour but these are uniformly jobs with promotion potential to at least $15 an hour wages. For more information:

Richard Oulahan
Executive Director
Esperanza Unida
1329 West National Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53204
414/671-0251

Recommended Readings

"The Business of Self-Sufficiency: Microcredit Programs in the United States," by Valjean McLenighan and Jean Pogge. 53 pgs. 1991. Published by and available from the Woodstock Institute, see address below. $8.00 for nonprofits; $16 for others.

"Job Creation for Self-Sufficiency," by Tom Miller and Bob Friedman. 26 pgs. 1985. Available in photocopy from the Community Information Exchange. $2.60 plus $2.50 postage and handling.

"Small Business Incubators: A How-To Guide," by Paul Pryde. 30 pgs. 1984. Published by and available from the Community Information Exchange. $4.50 for members; $7.50 for nonmembers; plus $2.50 postage and handling.

Resource Organizations

Association for Enterprise Opportunity
320 North Michigan Ave., Ste 804
Chicago, IL 60601
312/357-0177

This is the recently-formed trade association for microenterprise programs.

National Business Incubation Association
One President St.
Athens, OH 45701
614/593-4331

This is the trade association for developers and managers of small business incubators.

National Congress for Community Economic Development
1875 Connecticut Ave., NW, Ste 524
Washington, DC 20009
202/234-5009

NCCED tracks legislation affecting community-based economic development and, through its monthly newsletter "Resources," publishes information about community-based enterprises.

Seedco
Partnerships for Self-Sufficiency
915 Broadway
New York, NY 10010
212/473-0357

This national nonprofit organization provides technical assistance to communities to establish partnerships with local anchor institutions, such as hospitals and universities, for community revitalization.

Woodstock Institute
407 South Dearborn
Chicago, IL 60605
312/427-8070

The institute is a research and technical assistance organizations that specializes in developing reinvestment strategies for financing programs for affordable housing and job creation for low-income communities.

Job Retention

For every two factory jobs lost, three more jobs are lost in the service sector. With large-scale plant closings, the ripple effect spreads throughout the entire regional economy, undermining the tax base, depressing consumer spending, swelling demand for social services. Poverty is indissolubly linked to the disinvestment and deindustrialization occurring in our communities.

Community leaders and workers need to shift thinking: instead of trying to get a piece of the pie, the community needs to take charge of baking the pie. Collaborations rooted in the community, bringing together workers, residents, community organizations, churches, local government and businesses, have the expertise and resources to take actions that will retain jobs. Jobs, production and workplace democracy need to be part of the broader context of sustainable community development.

Each community should devise a conscious, deliberate strategy for saving jobs. A number of new approaches and tools have been created to save jobs and to place manufacturing more centrally within communities. Because of the unusual and alarming loss of manufacturing jobs, unions, public agencies and many in the private sector are open now to approaches that they may have shied away from in former years.

Early warning. The branch plants of distant, absentee owners are the highest-risk for job loss and shutdowns, according to the Midwest Center for Labor Research. Branch plants are also likely targets for employee buyouts. The trick is to get a branch plant away from its conglomerate parent before the facility has been too severely disinvested and mismanaged. Many manufacturing companies are closed prematurely, through decisions that reflect the needs of the parent company rather than the financial viability of the enterprise and the needs of the employees and the community.

A federal law, called WARN, requires a 60-day advance notice of shutdown, but that amount of time is not adequate and the law is often ignored. The community should be trained to spot the danger signs of shutdown as far in advance as possible to gain lead time to act. Neighborhood groups can spearhead efforts to organize the community in collaboration with the workers at the threatened industry and can bring in other partners, such as churches, banks and responsive government agencies.

Employee buyouts. Instead of settling for severance pay and insurance benefits, workers in numerous factories have organized to purchase the plant through an Employee Stock Option Plan (ESOP) and convert it to a democratically-run, employee-owned company. An ESOP, which uses a C Corporation structure, is a qualified employee benefit, governed by federal labor laws. Most ESOPs offer little or nothing toward giving the workers a voice in running the company; the ESOP must be specifically structured to ensure a democractically-run business. Funds to help workers buy their shares can come from the union or public pension plans, church or foundation social investment programs, a local credit union or specialized lenders such as the National Cooperative Bank Development Corporation and the Industrial Cooperative Association's Revolving Loan Fund.

Worker cooperative. Another way to re-employ workers and to ensure their participation in the management of the business is to set up a worker cooperative. This structure gives employees the right to elect management on a one person/one vote basis and to participate in day-to-day operations. A worker cooperative or a democractic ESOP may be started as a new business, or as a conversion (when the former owner of the business sells it to the employees), or as the result of a plant closing. In the Naugatuck Valley of Connecticut, an area which suffered from the massive loss of its manufacturing sector, a worker

cooperative has been established whose members work as home health aides to the chronically ill. For more information:

Pat Diorio
Valley Care Cooperative Inc.
168 Prospect St.
Waterbury, CT 06710
203/755-1822.

Retraining and job creation. When workers and the community cannot save a plant from being shut down, one recourse is retraining, either for employment in other industries or for self-employment. The Economic Dislocation Worker Adjustment Assistance Act (EDWAA) is a source of federal funds for retraining and job search assistance for plant closing victims; the funds are allocated to the states on a formula basis; part of that money is retained by each state, the remainder channeled through local Private Industry Councils.

Eminent domain. Eminent domain is the authority of a public body to condemn homes and businesses and recompense the owners for them, for a public purpose. The power of eminent domain has only been tried in a few cities as a tool to take over and thus retain businesses. A local jurisdiction's eminent domain authority must be legislated by the state. Eminent domain can be used by public entities ranging from a Port Authority to the local economic development agency. The Midwest Center for Labor Research is a source of research and other assistance.

Succession planning. About two-fifths of the aging entrepreneurs who own businesses do not have a plan to pass along ownership to a successor. As a result, when the owner dies or retires, the business closes down. Some communities have begun to experiment with initiatives that intervene to save such businesses, identifying likely candidates, then helping to recruit and train new owners and managers. Chicago Focus, a spin-off of the Midwest Center for Labor Research, is one group that brokers the passing of businesses from retiring owners to new entrepreneurs. CommonWorks, a nonprofit organization focusing on Central New York, surveyed retirement-age business owners in their region to determine their succession plans; the group will share its survey methodology and results without charge; write to them at 821 Euclid Ave., Syracuse, NY 13210.

Other tools to retain manufacturing businesses include using legal action against runaway companies who had gotten public subsidies, or educating the public and private sectors through a social cost analysis that shows the lost tax revenues and increases in welfare that will result from a plant closing.

The Marland Mold Company Employee Buy-Out Pittsfield, MA

Ten months after its distant corporate owner announced plans to shut down Marland Mold, a manufacturer of high precision steel molds for the injection plastic molding industry, the plant reopened its doors as an employee-owned business, immediately saving 55 local high-wage manufacturing jobs. The Marland Mold worker buy-out is characterized by major elements that, together, made the deal possible and will ensure the viability of the new company. First, everyone in the community played an important and positive role, from financial institutions, politicians, the local chamber of commerce, and organized labor, to the state and the nonprofit sector. Secondly, the union made a social investment from its pension funds that was the major equity investment. And third, the structure of the Employee Stock Ownership Plan, under which the workers' shares in the company are purchased, will ensure that the company is democratically run.

The plant is located in the mid-sized city of Pittsfield, in Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts. Pittsfield lost 43 percent of its manufacturing jobs between 1980 and 1991, the worst job loss for any urban area in Massachusetts.

Marland Mold opened in 1946 as a family-owned firm, one of Pittsfield's first plastic companies. Among the products it became famous for are the molds used in making bottle caps. In 1968 the company was sold to a conglomerate, in 1974, to another conglomerate, and in 1989, it was spun off to Tredegar Industries, a newly-formed Virginia-based corporation.

The plant's employees and their union, the International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE), learned that Tredegar wanted to sell the plant several months before the firm announced that fact in November 1991. The corporation had decided to sell the plant in order to consolidate mold making activities at a non-union plant in Florida. During the winter, almost half the 100-person workforce was laid off. The local congressman, Rep. John W. Olver, suggested the idea of an employee buy-out.

Skilled workers and their union bought the Marland Mold Company factory after a feasibility study showed rising demand for the beverage cap molds they produce. *Photo: Sarah Putnam*

The IUE engaged Shared Ownership and Management, Inc. (SOMI) and the ICA Group (formerly known as the Industrial Cooperative Association) as consultants to help with the buy-out.

With funding from the IUE local, the Central Berkshire Chamber of Commerce, city CDBG funds pledged by the newly elected mayor and a grant from the state's Industrial Services Program, SOMI and ICA did an analysis to determine whether the buyout would be feasible and a business plan to see whether as an independent stand-alone company it could be profitable. The answer was positive on all counts. To make the deal more attractive, the new potential owners, both management and labor, voted themselves 10 percent pay cuts. A separate company was set up specifically to acquire the plant and letters of commitment for the financing lined up.

The purchase of the business cost $2.45 million. The equity investment totalling $900,000 by two IUE pension funds makes the union the major equity investor. This investment was arranged through the social investment unit of Frankin Research & Development Corporation of Boston, which manages a portion of the union pension funds. As a result, the IUE will own 75-80 percent of the company. SOMI will own 5 percent. The workers will own 30 percent of the stock—of that portion, approximately 18 percent of the stock was allocated to employees through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan and 12 percent purchased directly by employees (including managers) through individual subscriptions.

Multibank West/First Agricultural Bank of Pittsfield is the senior lender, with a $2.35 million term loan and a $350,000 line of credit. Subordinated debt financing involved: $80,000 from the ICA Revolving Loan Fund (a separate nonprofit affiliate of The ICA Group); $250,000 from the NCB Development Corporation; $100,000 from the Economic Stabilization Trust Fund (established by the Massachusetts Industrial Services Program, the fund lends money to troubled manufacturing businesses); and $50,000 from the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, the city-sponsored economic development agency.

The deal is structured so that, as the IUE pension funds sell their stock, the ESOP allows the workers to buy back the shares; by the seventh or eighth year of operation, they could own a majority of the stock. They would pay for these purchases by borrowing funds from a commercial bank, then paying back that loan out of the company's profits.

The former plant manager, Don Madison, who began his career with Marland Mold 31 years ago and worked up through the ranks, serves as the company's president. He and other management members participated in the buy-out.

Madison expects that the 54,000 square foot plant will generate around $6 million in the first year (half of the income generated during the heyday of the company) and build to $10 million in five years. Currently 55 employees are on the payroll, and it's expected that number will grow to 70 within the first year and to 100 or 115 by the end of the fifth year. Fortunately, the company has experienced growing demand for its specialized beverage cap mold which may accelerate their growth.

For more information:

Don E. Madison
Marland Mold, Inc.
125 Pecks Road
Pittsfield, MA 01201
413/443-4481

John Barmack
SOMI, Inc.
249 A St.
Boston, MA 02210
617/423-7518

Seth Evans
The ICA Group
20 Park Plaza, Suite 1127
Boston, MA 02116
617/338-0010

Recommended Readings

"Early Warning Manual Against Plant Closings," by Greg Leroy. 71 pgs. 1986. Published by and available from the Midwest Center for Labor Research. See address below. $15.00.

"Saving Manufacturing," Labor Research Review #19. 105 pgs. 1992. Published by and available from the Midwest Center for Labor Research. See address below. $8.00 (bulk prices available.)

"Toward a New Vision of Community Economic Development," by Dan Swinney, Miquel Vasquez, and Howard Engelskirschen. 13 pgs. 1991. A paper published by and available in photocopy from the Midwest Center, see address below. $5.00 contribution requested.

Resource Organizations

Federation for Industrial Retention and Renewal (FIRR)
3411 W. Diversey Ave., #10
Chicago, IL 60647
312/252-7676

A national coalition, currently with 31 member groups, organized to provide research and technical assistance to preserve basic industry and jobs.

The ICA Group, Inc.
20 Park Plaza, Ste 1127
Boston, MA 02116
617/338-0010

The nation's oldest and most experienced organization assisting worker-owned and community-based enterprises with business, legal and financial services.

Midwest Center for Labor Research
3411 West Diversey Ave., Suite 10
Chicago, IL 60646
312/278-5418

Provides research on trends in the workplace and labor union movement, and assistance on organizing grassroots strategies to extend democracy into the workplace and the economy. Produces twice-yearly Labor Research Review; $25 for a 2-year subscription.

National Center for Employee Ownership
2201 Broadway, Suite 807
Oakland, CA 94612
415/272-9461

Major Research Underway Now on Jobs Initiatives

The Aspen Institute's Local Employment Approaches for the Disadvantaged Project is in the midst of a two-year study of the kinds of jobs initiatives discussed in this ALERT. The project is funded by the Mott, Joyce and MacArthur Foundations. An interim paper discussing their project, "From the Bottom Up: Toward a Strategy for Income and Employment Generation Among the Disadvantaged," is available without cost: 1333 New Hampshire Ave. NW, Suite 1070, Washington, DC 20036; 202/736-5800.

The U.S. Dept of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, provided EDWAA demonstration funding to local nonprofit organizations to create job opportunities for dislocated workers through vocational or self-employment training. Berkeley Planning Associates is evaluating the demonstration. Their newsletter with sketches of the local initiatives is available: 440 Grand Ave., Suite 500, Oakland, CA 94610; 510/465-7884.

The Minority Female Single Parent Demonstration, funded by The Rockefeller Foundation's Equal Opportunity Program, was a 6-year demonstration, providing funding to four community-based organizations (of which the Center for Employment Training was one) to explore the elements of a comprehensive employment-training approach for women on welfare. Contact the foundation's Communications Department about the very useful series of publications drawing on the lessons learned: 1133 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036; 212/869-8500.

The Economic Development Assistance Consortium (EDAC), together with Carnegie Mellon University, is studying the activities of CDCs in providing job training services to their communities, what works, and what capacity building needs to exist to help CDCs return to this activity. The study is funded by the Ford Foundation's Urban Poverty Program. EDAC's newsletter on its study is available: One Faneuil Hall Marketplace, Boston, MA 02109; 617/742-4481.

Financial Resources: Federal Government Employment and Training Programs

It's said that there are 125 federal programs that provide funding for employment and training. Here are the most important ones.

JTPA (Job Training Partnership Act) is the leading federal program for job search and placement and vocational training. JTPA's funding is mainly allocated to state and local governments, but various demonstration programs are authorized annually by Congress. Contact your local government for information on how to access JTPA funds. For general information on JTPA:
Mr. Hugh Davies
Acting Director Office of Employment and Training Programs
U.S. Dept. of Labor
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210
(202) 219-5580.

JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Program) provides matching funds to states for programs that help welfare recipients move to self-sufficiency through remedial education, job search assistance, vocational training, and work experience. Also funds support services such as day care. For more information:
Mary Ann Higgins
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201
(202) 401-9294.

Food Stamp program includes funds to provide employment and training to people receiving food stamps. For more information:
Marva Younger
Food Stamp Specialist
U.S. Dept. of Agriculture
3101 Park Center Dr., Room 914
Alexandria, VA 22302
(703) 305-2250.

Adult Education Act provides funds for vocational training and remedial education in reading, writing, and mathematics. For more information:
Jeanne Williams
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Dept. of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Room 4512
Washington, D.C. 20202
(202) 732-1838.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act provides funds for vocational training and retraining. For more information:
Harvey Thiel
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
U.S. Dept. of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Room 4512
Washington, D.C. 20202
(202) 205-5680.

EDWAA (Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act) provides funds through state agencies for training and retraining for dislocated workers. Contact your state government to learn how to access these funds. For general information on the program:
Robert N. Colombo
Office of Worker Retraining and Readjustment Programs
U.S. Dept. of Labor
200 Connecticut Ave., N.W.
Room N-4703
Washington, D.C. 20210
(202) 219-5577.

Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act includes a provision to fund demonstration programs for job training for the homeless. Funding is provided through the Supportive Housing Program for which HUD is currently accepting proposals until May 21. Funding is also allocated to the states through the Emergency Shelter Grants Program for job training; contact the appropriate state agency for more information. For general information:
James Forsber
Special Needs Assistance Programs
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410
(202) 708-4300.

The Office of Community Services provides discretionary grants for job training under its urban and rural community economic and housing development program. For funding information:
Eleria M. Hunter
Office of Community Services
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services
370 L'Enfant Promenade S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447
(202) 401-9340.

The Office of Community Planning and Development of HUD is preparing guidelines for a program modeled after the successful YouthBuild program in Massachusetts. The program combines housing rehabilitation with job training for youth. The Office is expected to publish a Notice of Funding Availability for the program in June. For more information:
Albert Zinno
Office of Community Planning and Development
U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development
451 Seventh St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20410
(202) 708-2290.

The Alert is a quarterly report of the Community Information Exchange, a national non-profit information and technical assistance provider. The Alert is a benefit of membership in the Exchange, or may be purchased separately for $25/year.

This Alert is sponsored by a generous grant from Citibank. It also benefited from the author's research sponsored by World Vision for a forthcoming guide for church- and other community-based organizations. This book will be a companion to World Vision's 1992 affordable housing guide, "Rebuilding Our Commnities: How Churches Can Provide, Support, and Finance Quality Housing for Low-Income Families."

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